

Outreach and Mission

P. Joe DeHamer

The Outreach and Mission Committee (OMC) is pleased to report that the First Presbyterian Church of Dearborn has responded with great generosity to the needs of disaster victims through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) during 2005. Nearly \$8,000.00 was raised through OMC approved unscheduled benevolence funds, various fund raising activities, and the generous offerings of the congregation to help the victims of the Tsunami in late 2004 in southeast Asia. OMC also used \$1,500.00 of the Session-approved funds for PDA to reduce the suffering in the Congo. Finally, nearly \$12,000.00 was given to help alleviate the devastation caused by hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma in the southern United States. These funds were raised through Session-approved funds for PDA, various fund raisers, and the generous giving of the congregation.

Also, in 2005, OMC supported the Detroit Presbytery in building a house in partnership with Habitat for Humanity. OMC supplied \$6,250.00 and the largely unskilled services of Joe DeHamer and Jim Barber. Jim and I worked hard on everything from leveling soil and laying sod to hanging doors and painting walls. We also had the experience of meeting former president Jimmy Carter. The house turned out well, and the family seemed genuinely happy with the result. In total, Habitat for Humanity built 30 houses in the Detroit area. OMC continues to support Habitat for Humanity with Session-approved funds of \$2,000.00 annually.

In 2005, the OMC-supported scholarship candidate Aaranisa Clay graduated from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Working with Grandale Church of the Master, OMC identified three new candidates who went through a selection process including interviews. OMC decided to split the Session-approved \$5,000.00 scholarship among the three candidates Paul Fabre (\$2,000.00) Shakesha Jones-Hadley (\$1,000.00) and Mmese Mbek (\$2,000.00).

Following our recent custom, the church observed The Month of Missions in October by having a missionary as guest preacher at both services and as speaker at the Education Hour. This year we were honored to have Barbara Penney, most recently Professor of English at Minjiang College, Fuzhou, China, as our guest. As she explained, it is illegal for foreigners to evangelize in that country, so her ministry was one of conducting her life as teacher and layperson as a Christian example to others. In this vein, Barbara told us of a Bible as Literature course she was permitted to present. She also described the enormous changes in China during her nine years of service there. After her visit she was delighted to learn that, in response, our church would donate \$1,000 towards the purchase of Chinese Bibles for distribution to churches in that country.

(continued on page 2)

In 2006, OMC has significant opportunities for ministry. Our adopted church Grandale Church of the Master faces many challenges. OMC supports Grandale through \$5,000.00 of Session-approved funds and OMC unscheduled benevolence funds as special needs arise. The Grandale congregation consists of approximately 37 members and is unable to support itself monetarily. At the 11/17/05 meeting, the Grandale Mission Board discussed the \$1.3 million assessment of the property and alternatives for either keeping the property and maintaining it or selling the facility. No final decisions were made, and the board did not meet in December and a date for a January meeting has not yet been set. The ten-week fall Latchkey program was successful, and a winter/spring program will begin the third week of January and run through May. Finally, FPC is involved in providing tutoring services for Grandale. If anyone would like to help with the Grandale situation, please contact Bob Missler of the OMC.

Also, in 2006, Christnet is a ministry in which a growing number of members of the FPC congregation are serving the needy in our area. Susan Schloff, the Christnet coordinator, reports that the 2005 program went well and that it was nice to see so many new members involved. This ministry is an outstanding opportunity to be personally involved in service to people who truly need the help of the People of God in this area. If you would like further information, please contact Susan Schloff.

OMC is in the front line of, as our Mission Statement reads, serving God's world. To all who believe that they are being called to serve in the ministries listed above and others in obedience to God's commands, please contact OMC through Joe DeHamer.